LABOR.

THERE'S a never-dying chorus
Breaking on the human ear,
In the busy town before us,
Voices loud, and deep, and clear,
This is Labor's endless ditty,
This is Toil's prophetic voice,
Sounding through the town and city,
Bidding human hearts rejoice.

Sweeter than the poet's singing
Is that anthem of the free;
Blither is the anvil's ringing
Than the song of bird or bee,
There's a glory in the rattle
Of the wheels 'mid factory gloom;
Richer than e'er snatched from battle
Are the trophies of the loom.

See the skilful mason raising
Gracefully yon towering pile;
Round the forge and furnace blazing
Stand the noble men of toil,
They are heroes of the people,
Who the wealth of nations raise;
Every dome, and spire, and steeple
Rear their heads in Labor's praise.

Glorious men of truth and labor,
Shepherds of the human fold,
That shall lay the brand and sabre
With the barbarous things of old;
Priests and prophets of creation,
Bloodless heroes in the fight,
Toilers for the world's salvation,
Messengers of peace and light.

Speed the plough and speed the harrow;
Peace and plenty send abroad;
Better far the spade and barrow
Than the cannon or the sword.
Each invention, each improvement,
Renders weak oppression's rod;
Every sign and every movement
Brings us nearer truth and God.

AGRICULTURAL.

The Garden.

THE garden is a bound volume of agricultural life, written in poetry. In it the farmer and his family set the great industries of the plough, spade, and hoe in rhyme. Every flower or fruit-bearing tree is a green syllable after the graceful type and curse of Eden. Every bed of flowers is an acrostic to Nature, written in the illustrated capitals of her own alphabet. Every bed of beets, celery, or savory roots or bulbs, is a page of blank verse, full of *belles lettres* of agriculture. The farmer may be seen in his garden. It contains the synopsis of his character in letters that may be read across the road. The barometer hung by his door will indicate certain facts about the weather; but the garden, lying on the sunny side of the house, marks with precision the degree of mind and heart culture which he has reached. It will embody and reflect his tastes, the bent and bias of his perceptions of grace and beauty. In it he holds up the mirror of his inner life to all who pass; and with an observant eye they may see all the features of his intellectual being in it. In that choice rood of earth he records his progress in mental cultivation and professional experience. In it he marks, by some intelligent sign, his scientific and successful ceremonies in the corn-field. In it you may see the germs of his reading, and you can almost tell the number and nature of his books. In it he will produce the seed thought he has culled from the printed pages of his library. In it he will post an answer to the question whether he has any reading at all. Many a nominal farmer's house has been passed by the book agent without a call, because he saw a blunt, gruff negative to the question in the garden or yard.—*Elihu Burritt.*

Early Planting of Corn.

IN the Northern States May is often a cold, wet, rainy month, and corn planted early either does not come up at all, or it drags out a poor, yellowish, dwindling life, until the warm weather of June, while the farmer has to wage a steady battle with the weeds in order to see his corn-rows at all. This is often the case at least, and we very much prefer to do other work in the early part of the month, meanwhile keeping the ground open by occasional harrowings, so that perhaps two or three crops of weeds will start up and be killed before the 20th or 25th, at which time we prefer to put in the main crop. An early maturing kind is best, and this cannot be too much insisted on both at the East and West; and we prefer not to go far out of the neighborhood for it, if we have not enough of such seed as we want of our own raising.

Take perfect ears with small cobs, and well filled out. Use only the perfect kernels. If the ear is perfect and thoroughly ripe all the kernels may be used; but if the ear is misshapen and the kernels at the tip not so ripe and hard as the rest, plant only from the middle of the ear. Soak the corn twelve hours, then change the water, adding that which is as hot as one can bear his hand in. To this add a little pine tar, and stir the whole until the corn is all thinly coated with tar. Pour off the water, and roll the corn in slaked lime. Plant within twelve hours, covering only about half an inch.—*American Agriculturist.*

Manuring Corn in the Hill.

WHEN manure is scarce and the greatest effect is demanded the first season, or when corn is on a good sod, and a little start is wanted at first, or when the land is rather cold and the season uncertain, it is best to manure in the hill for corn. If one has a fine compost, say of swamp muck and manure, containing one-quarter of the latter, after marking out, a good shovelful may be distributed to three or four hills, and the corn dropped directly upon it. If, however, the compost is made up of ashes, superphosphate, guano, poudrette, etc., singly or mingled, it must be mixed with soil and covered with a little earth besides, or the seed may be killed by coming in contact with it. Such active fertilizers, and the list is large, must always be used with care, not to have the seed injured. Yet they are needed close at hand, for the encouragement of the young plant as soon as it starts. Superphosphate, ashes, gypsum, soda, saltpetre, etc., may be applied upon the hill after the corn is up, or at least after planting, with quite as good effect as if put in the hill.

The list of concentrated manures which may be made on the farm, or bought, is quite large, and if any person visits the manufactories of various kinds in this vicinity, he will often be able to secure much that is of value to himself, and to the shoemaker, soap boiler, brewer, tanner, bucher, or glue boiler a favor also.—*New York Agriculturist.*

Caterpillars.

THE attention of the owners of apple-trees should be at once given to caterpillar deposits on their apple-trees. Two or three days of warm weather will reveal the presence of the young vermin, and the eggs should be removed before the leaves on the trees are out.

The *Maine Farmer* says: "With a ladder and hand hatchet a man can do more in one hour *now* to destroy the caterpillar than in ten hours after the leaves are out. The eggs of this nest were laid in Autumn, and may be found near the extremity of the branches. They look like small coils of thread wound round the twigs. We apprehend vast damage to the apple and plum crops from their ravages, for it is difficult to move farmers to the patient toil that is necessary to save the fruit. But no labor which a man with an orchard can employ himself about will reward him so well.

ENGAGEMENT-RINGS.

OF all personal ornaments the finger-ring is perhaps the most ancient, and has been the most extensively worn. The philosophers of antiquity regard it as the emblem of eternity, and it is pleasant to connect this idea with the affection of which it is the symbol.

A ring has been used in all ages as a gift of love, or token of betrothal. Since the beginning of the present century it has been called an "engagement-ring," and, as young ladies well know, it is worn on the index finger of the left hand; but our fair friends may not be equally aware that, as it was the precursor of matrimonial alliance, it was formerly designated as a pronubial or pledge ring, when it was worn on the fourth finger; at a period, however, when our maternal ancestors—less romantic, it would seem, than their fair descendants—wore that charmed circlet on their thumbs. Originally the pronubus was made of iron, consisting of a plain hoop. Subsequently it was made more massive; sufficiently so to admit of some precious gem, or a suitable device.

Although not mentioned in the Bible, the traditions of "the chosen people" inform us that engagement-rings have for ages been used by them at the espousals before marriage, and are said to have been introduced as substitutes for the pieces of gold paid on purchase of the bride, in accordance with an ancient custom called "co-emption," alluded to in the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis. The laws of the Hebrews require the ring to be of a certain value, and must have been acquired by the bridegroom neither on credit, nor by gift. This being properly certified it is put on the bride's finger, and, should the ceremony not be further proceeded with, no other marriage could be contracted by either party without a legal divorce.

The early Christians, who also used the pronubus, introduced, together with a better faith, a better metal for their rings—transmuting the iron badge of servitude into a circlet of pure gold—the least corruptible of metals, indicating, at the same time, both purity and duration. Instead of pagan cupids, the new device consisted of two right hands clasped together, betokening a vastly improved conception of the reciprocal duties, and the equality of the two contracting parties.

At the period of the Reformation the engagement-rings of the more opulent members of society frequently contained rubies—emblematic of "exalted love"—set round with diamonds—indicative of "duration." Than this none other could be more appropriate, and of such was that which Martin Luther presented to his betrothed.

Although generally understood as tokens of affection, rings were frequently given with very different sentiments. Photius relates that a man who had become tired of his wife presented her with a ring of divorce. Having placed it on her finger, he adds (which is much to the lady's credit) that she received it with the same docile obedience with which she had formerly accepted the wedding-ring.

On searching the classics we find that Greek sentimentalism first gave mystic significance to rings, as they engraved upon them legends or mottoes typical of love and devotion. From Juvenal we learn that—at least during the Roman Empire—the man put a ring on the finger of his betrothed as a pledge of his fidelity. Readers of English history may remember the story which connected the death of the Earl of Essex with a ring given to him by that old coquette, Queen Elizabeth, who engaged that when it should be sent to her as a sign of his being in trouble, she would protect him. The ring was really sent by Essex when under sentence of death, but was intercepted by the Countess of Nottingham, who, on her death-bed, divulged the secret to her royal mistress, who declared that "although God might forgive her, she never could.

THEORY OF GOSSIP.

WE are often asked "what is gossip?" We answer, in a general way, that it is talking of persons rather than of things. Nothing shows the paucity of ideas more than this talking about the affairs of your neighbors. It is not only malicious people who originate scandal, it is narrow-minded people, ignorant people, stupid people. Persons of culture and intelligence are not so hard run for topics of conversation. They can usually find something to say about art, literature, fashion, or society. The moment people begin to talk of their neighbors—of persons rather than of things—they are apt to degenerate into scandal; for where one speaks of the virtues of an acquaintance a dozen expatiate on his or her shortcomings. And this bring us to speak of real culture, or what we consider to be such, at least. A cultivated person, in the highest sense of the term, is not merely one who can talk of books, pictures, and other elevated subjects of human interest. To be thoroughly cultivated, the heart, as well as the intellect, should be refined and enlarged. Sometimes we see women who, without education, yet having been born amiable, are never guilty of gossip. Again, we see women, not naturally amiable, whom education has taught to talk of things, not of persons. The perfect woman, in this respect, is one who is both amiable and educated. But education does not always elevate people above the regions of gossip. A really bad heart is always malicious. The best advice we can give is the homely old adage: "Mind your own business." Very few of us ever know the whole truth about anything concerning a neighbor; and to speak of his or her conduct is usually to run the risk of being unjust. Much less should we talk of the motives of others. Very few of us know our own motives, and to venture on discussing a neighbor's motives is always impertinence, and often a real crime.

FOR YOUTHFUL READERS.

Amy, the Child.

I FOUND the story of "Amy, the Child," in an old German pocket-book.

One Sunday afternoon, in Summer-time, the village children went into the church to be taught their catechism. Among them was Amy, the shepherd's step-daughter, some seven years old. She was a tender-hearted child; and when the clergyman, after speaking of our duty toward our neighbor, said, "All people who would please God must do good according to their means, be those means ever so little," she could not refrain from weeping.

For Amy was very poor, and felt innocently persuaded that she had no power whatever to gladden by her love or kindness any earthly creature; not even a lamb, or a young dove. She had neither, poor child.

So Amy came out of church with sadness in her heart, thinking that God would take no pleasure in her, because (but that was only her own idea) she had never yet done good to any one.

Not wishing that her eyes, now red with weeping, should be seen at home, she went into the fields, and laid herself down under a wild-rose bush. There she remarked that the leaves of the shrub, tarnished with dust, were dry and drooping, and the pretty pink blossoms looked pale and faded; for there had been no rain for a very long time.

She hastened to a brook that flowed by at no great distance, drew water in the hollow of her hand (for cup she had none), and thus toilfully and by slow degrees, often going and as often returning, she washed the dust away from the languishing rose bush, and so refreshed its roots by the timely moisture that soon it reared itself again in strength and beauty, and joyfully and fragrantly unfolded its blossoms to the sun.

After that little Amy wandered on by the side of the brook in the meadows whence she had obtained the water. As she gazed upon it she almost envied the silver stream, because it had been able to do good to the rose-tree.

On what she herself had done she did not bestow a single thought.

Proceeding a little way further she observed a great stone lying in the bed of the narrow brook, and so choking up the channel that the water could only struggle past it slowly, and, as it were, drop by drop. Owing to this obstacle all the merry prattle of the stream was at an end. This grieved Amy on the water's account; so with naked feet she went into the stream, and shook the heavy stone. Some time elapsed before she could move it from its place; but at length, by tasking all her strength, she rolled it out, and got it to remain on the top of the bank. Then the streamlet flowed merrily by, and the purling waves seemed to be murmuring thanks to the gentle child.

And onward still went Amy, for at home she knew there was no one who cared to inquire after her. She was disliked by her step-father, and even her own mother loved the younger children much better than she loved her. This constituted the great sorrow of Amy's life.

Going far about, and ever sad because she had done good to no one, she at last returned to the village. Now, by the very first cottage she came to, there lay in a little garden a sick child whose mother was gone to glean in the neighboring fields. Before she went, however, she had made a toy—a little windmill put together with thin slips of wood—and had placed it by her little son, to amuse him, and to make the time appear shorter to him during her absence.

Every breath of air, however, had died away beneath the trees, so that the tiny sails of the wind-mill turned round no more. And the sick child, missing the playful motion, lay sorrowfully upon the green turf, under the yellow marigolds, and wept.

Then Amy stepped quickly over the low garden-hedge, heedless that it tore her only Sunday frock, knelt before the little wind-mill, and blew with all her might upon its slender sails. Thus impelled they were soon in merry motion, as at first. Then the sick child laughed, and clapped his little hands; and Amy, delighted at his pleasure, was never weary of urging the sails round and round with her breath.

At last the child, tired out by the joy which the little wind-mill had given him, fell fast asleep; and Amy, warned by the evening shadows which began to gather round her, turned her steps toward home. Faint and exhausted was she, for since noon she had eaten nothing.

When she reached the cottage door, and stopped there for a moment with beating heart, she heard her step-father's voice, loud and quarrelsome, resounding from within. He had just returned from the ale-house, and was in his well-known angry humor, which the least cause of irritation might swell into a storm. Unfortunately as Amy, trembling, entered the room, her torn frock caught his eye. His passion was kindled at the sight. Roused to fury in a moment he stumbled forward, and with his powerful fist struck the poor little child on the forehead.

Then Amy bowed her head like the whithered roses in the field, for the blow had fallen upon her temple. As she sank, pale and dying, to the ground, her mother with loud lamentations sprang forward and kneeled beside her. Even the stern and angry man, suddenly sobered by his own deed, became touched with pity.

So both the parents wept and mourned over Amy, and laid her upon her little couch in the small inner chamber, and strewed round her green branches, and various kinds of flowers, such as marigolds and many-colored poppies; for the child was dead!

But while the parents bitterly reproached themselves, and wished they had been kinder to poor Amy, behold a wonder!

The door of the chamber gently opened, and the waves of the brook which Amy had set free came gently rippling by in the stillness, and sprinkled the mouth and eyes of the dead child. The cool drops flowed into her veins, and once more set the arrested blood in motion.

Then she again unclosed her eyes, which so lately had been dim and motionless, and she heard the soft waves, like gentle voices, murmuring these words in her ear:

"This we do unto thee, in return for the good thou didst unto us."

Yet a little while, and the chamber was again stirred by the presence of some kindly power.

This time it was a gentle Breeze which entered with softly fluttering wings. Tenderly it kissed the forehead of the child, and lovingly it breathed its fresh breath into her bosom.

Then Amy's heart began to thrill with quicker life, and she stretched out her hand to the many-colored flowers, and rejoiced in their beauty.

And the Breeze softly said:

"I bring thee back the breath which thou didst expend upon the sick child's pleasure!"

Then Amy smiled, as if she were full of bliss.

When the Breeze had ceased to murmur its soft words an Angel came gliding in, through the low door of the little chamber, and in his hand he held a garland of fresh fragrant roses. These he laid against the cheek of the pale child; and lo! they restored to it the hues of life, and they bloomed again. And the flowers seemed to whisper:

"This we do unto thee, in return for the good thou didst unto us."

And the Angel kissed Amy on the forehead, eyes, and mouth; and then came life back to her in its strength.

And the Angel said to her:

"Forasmuch as thou hast done good according to thy means, and thou knewest it not, therefore shall a tenfold blessing rest upon thee!"

BOYHOOD.

A WRITER in *All the Year Round* thus philosophizes:

I wonder sometimes that if they can possibly be of the same genus as the boys with whom I associated when I myself was a boy. I paid a visit lately to a gentleman in the country, and in going over the house to view its lions, I was shown into a room where my host's boys printed a weekly newspaper *for their own amusement!* There were all the appliances of a printing-office: cases, galleys, rules, imposing-stones, and presses; and two young gentleman, whose united ages probably did not amount to five-and-twenty, were so far familiar with their use as to be able unaided to compose and print a weekly sheet containing news and articles of their own writing! I thought of my play-room, and what it contained. I had a vision of a penny top; a pop-gun roughly made from a branch of alder-tree; a kite composed of a halfpenny cane and a sheet of brown paper; a worsed ball wound upon an old barrel bung; and a teetotum.

Again: the other evening I went to a party, and I had scarcely entered the house when my host's two boys carried me off into the garden to take my photograph. One, quite a little fellow, posed me in the chair, instructing me to look at a certain spot, and warned me of that principle of the convex lens which has a tendency to enlarge feet and hands which are placed too much in advance of the rest of the body. The other boy, meanwhile, was in a dark room, playing with subtle chemicals of whose nature and properties his grandfather, the eminent chemist, had never even dreamed. In less than five minutes these two youngsters had used one of the closest secrets of nature to fix my image on a piece of glass. It was as easy a feat for them as for me to lift up my top, while spinning, in a spoon or in the hollow of my hand.

When I was a boy my stock of play literature consisted of some half-dozen sixpenny books, such as "Jack the Giant Killer," "Puss in Boots," "The History of Cock Robin," and an abridgement of "The Arabian Nights." I remember that I kept them locked up in a deal box, and was exceedingly chary of lending them, or even letting any one look at them. But boys, now-a-days, take in their monthly and weekly magazines; correspond with the editor; answer riddles and rebusses; contribute puzzles; and engage in chess tournaments by correspondence; they club subscription to Mudie's, and read all the new sensation novels as they appear. I see some square-capped boys, of not more than fourteen years, going to school every morning reading their penny newspapers. I have no doubt whatever that they read the law and the police reports under their desks when they ought to be learning their lessons. Boys and hobbledehoys used to be a nuisance, because they were lumpy and awkward, and uninteresting; and because they were too young to share in the conversation of grown-up people. But now-a-days, if boys are voted a nuisance at all—which they will not tamely permit—it is because they are too clever by half, and know a great deal too much.

WIT AND HUMOR.

IT is said that the prettiest girls in Salt Lake City marry *Young*.

THE London *Orchestra* says that the Pyne-Harrison Company is *reforming*.

JOSH BILLINGS said the other night that a good way for a man to train up a child in the way it should go, was to travel that way occasionally himself.

THE latest invention is the "palpitating bosom" for the ladies, which gently "heaves" by the touch of an "emotional spring" concealed under the left arm.

CIRCUMSTANCES either command or are commanded. They form the character of the feeble; they minister to the purposes and ultimate happiness of the strong.

A COUNTYYMAN who was charged with ten gallons of whiskey which a grocer put in an eight-gallon keg, said he "didn't mind the money overcharged so much as he did the strain on the keg."

"GUILTY or not guilty?" sharply said a city judge, the other day, to an inattentive female prisoner in the dock." "Just as your honor pleases. It's not for the like o' me to dictate to your honor's worship," was the reply.

IF you love others they will love you. If you speak kindly to them they will speak kindly to you. Love is repaid with love, and hatred with hatred. Would you hear a sweet and pleasant echo, speak sweetly and pleasantly.

"DIDN'T you tell me you could hold the plough?" said a farmer to an Irishman he had taken on trial. "Be aisy, now," says Pat. "How could I hould it an' two horses pullin' it away? Just stop the craturs and I'll hould it for ye."

A SOLDIER, on trial for habitual drunkenness, was addressed by the magistrate: "Prisoner, you have heard the charge of habitual drunkenness, what have you to say in defense?" "Nothing, please your honor, but habitual thirst."

THE Erie *Dispatch* says a wild man has been discovered in a forest in Clearfield County. He was covered all over with a copper-colored down, and when caught he was able to speak but one word, "draft." He had forgotten all the rest of the English language."

ONE drinking some beer at a pretty ale-house in the country, which was very strong of the hops, and hardly any taste of the malt, was asked by the landlord if it was not well hopped. "Yes," answered he, "if it had hopped a little further it would have hopped into the water."

THE most extraordinary instance of patience on record, in modern times, is that of a judge, who listened silently for two days, while a couple of wordy attorneys contended about the construction of an act of Legislature, and then ended the controversy by quietly remarking, "Gentlemen, the law is repealed."

A SERVANT, newly engaged, presented to his master, one morning, a pair of boots, the leg of one of which was much longer than the other. "How comes it, you rascal, that these boots are not of the same length?" "I really don't know, sir; but what bothers me the most is, that the pair down stairs are in the same fix."

A WAITER at a recent "grand party" in Washington, in carrying a tray through the crowd of guests, accidently hit a lady a severe blow with it on the elbow. "The deuce take the tray!" petulantly exclaimed the lady. "Madam," gravely said a Senator, noted for his whist-playing, who was standing near, "Madam, the deuce can't take the tray."

ANECDOTE OF DR. EMMONS.—A Pantheist minister met him one day and abruptly asked: "Mr. Emmons, how old are you?" "Sixty, sir, and how old are you?" "As old as the creation," was the answer in a triumphant tone. "Then you are the same age with Adam and Eve?" "Certainly; I was in the garden when they were." "I have always heard that there was a third person in the garden with them," replied the doctor with great coolness, "but I never knew before that it was *you*."

BEAUTIFUL SIMILE.—The pious Jonathan Edwards describes a Christian as being like "such a little flower as we see in the Spring of the year, low humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory, rejoicing, as it were, in a calm of rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrance, standing gracefully and lowly in the midst of other flowers." The world may think nothing of the little flower, they may not even notice it; but, nevertheless, it will be diffusing around sweet fragrance upon all who dwell within its lowly shore.

JUDGE ROOSEVELT was one day trying a tedious law-suit concerning patent medicines, in which a lawyer named Dyett appeared as counsel. The judge remarked: "Mr. Dyett, I wish you would favor the court by postponing the motion until some other justice is sitting at chambers; I am tired of being dosed with pills." "I would do anything in the world to oblige the court," said Mr. Dyett, "but my duty to my clients in this instance forbids that I should longer delay this motion, the most important that has ever been made in the case, and which, if postponed, would greatly distress my clients." "Mr. Dyett," said the judge, "if your clients are in great distress I would advise them, in the first place, to take some pills, and if that does not bring relief, then I would advise them to change their Dyett."